Recovery of priceless antiques by CBI

4029. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of priceless antiques and other articles, seized by the CBI during raids on illegal artifact dealers and smugglers, are lying in CBI godowns in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these articles are handed over to ASI only after cases are disposed of and by then they undergo unrepairable damage due to lack of care; and

(d) if so, the measures taken by CBI for proper maintenance and preservation of these articles?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir. A large number of antiquities and art treasures have been seized by the Central Bureau of Investigation in various searches conducted relating to Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972. These antiquities are not kept in godown but in a property maintained malkhana of Central Bureau of Investigation's specialized Antiquity Unit located at Central Bureau of Investigation Headquarters, New Delhi.

(b) These antiquities and art objects pertain to various cases registered by Central Bureau of Investigation during the past several years.

(c) and (d) The seized articles can be handed over to Archaeological Survey of India or National Museum, New Delhi only after the final decision of the court. It is the requirement of law that the seized objects should be maintained in a condition in which they have been seized. All the objects therefore are kept in proper condition.

Classical languages

4030. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the Indian languages that are notified as the classical languages and the benefits that may accrue on such notified classical languages;

(b) whether Tamil has been notified as a classical language; if so, when;

(c) whether there was any representation that the said notification has been found to be defective and warranted correction;

(d) whether it is a fact that the Tamil language, that has been notified as a classical language, has been allocated to his Ministry instead of having been kept under the Ministry of Human Resource Development; and

(e) by doing so, would it not loose certain privileges and benefits?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Government has declared Tamil as classical language. The Government has decided that the following benefits will be available to the languages declared or notified as classical languages:

(i) Two major international awards for scholars of eminence in Classical Indian languages are awarded annually.

(ii) A'Centre for Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages' is set up.

(iii) The University Grants Commission be requested to create, to start with at least in the central universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for Classical Languages for scholars of eminence in classical languages.

(b) Yes, Sir. On 12th October, 2004 a notification to this effect was issued.

(c) No, Sir. However, the Committee of Linguistic Experts set up by the Government of India to consider future claims of any language for Classical Status is currently examining the whole issue including the need for any change in the eligibility conditions for classifying a language as classical.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) No, Sir.

Funds for NER

4031. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the chunk of funds it is pouring into the North-Eastem Region is being siphoned away by some officers acting in connivance with the underground outfits;